

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

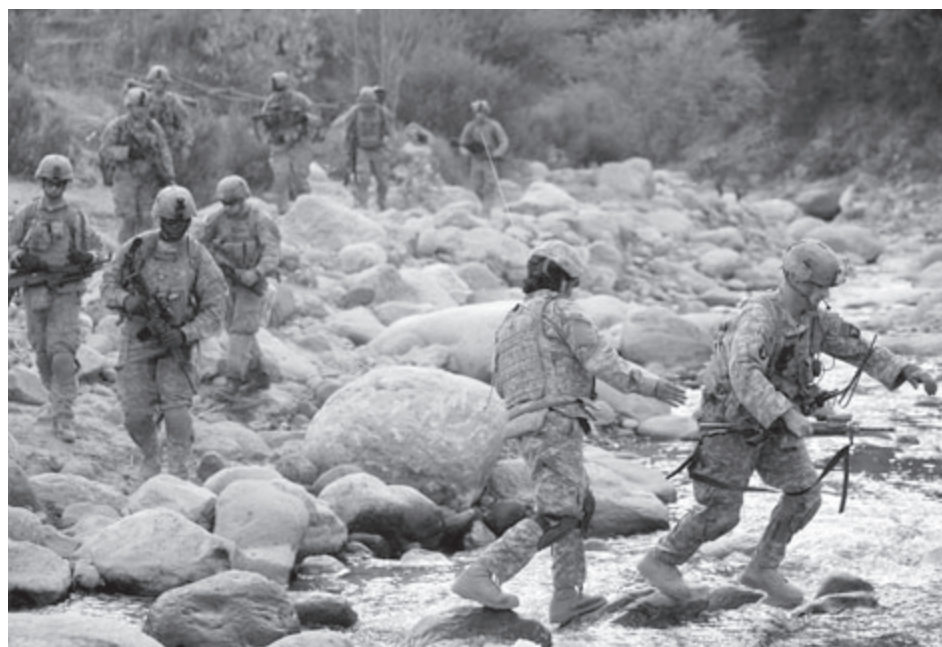
Introduction to new book
'Soldier of the Cuban Revolution'
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 75/NO. 1 JANUARY 10, 2011

Imperialists' Afghan progress is 'fragile'

Washington steps up actions in Pakistan



AP Photo/Rafiq Maqbool

U.S. troops in Kunar Province in eastern Afghanistan near Pakistan border, December 20.

BY SETH GALINSKY

The White House's just released "Overview of the Afghanistan and Pakistan Annual Review" says that U.S. imperialism has made progress in the region but it is "fragile and reversible." It reaffirms that Washington plans to keep troops in Afghanistan beyond 2014.

Washington has continued to escalate the war in Afghanistan, and its military operations in Pakistan since Barack Obama took office in January

2009. Boosted by 30,000 additional troops authorized by Obama, the U.S.-led forces have pushed Taliban fighters out of parts of southern Afghanistan.

U.S. officials recently told the *Washington Post* that U.S. Special Forces have increased their attacks sixfold over the last year on the Haqqani network, one of the main armed groups battling U.S. troops in Afghanistan.

Both the Haqqani network and Af-

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Gov't loses frame-up, tries for deportation

BY BERNIE SENTER

MIAMI—Even though he was found not guilty of all charges in the 2007 "anti-terrorism" trial of the Liberty City Seven, permanent U.S. resident Lyglenson Lemorin has been in immigration prison ever since his arrest. The government is preparing to deport him to Haiti, claiming that he is a terrorist sympathizer.

Lemorin, 35, has lived in Miami for more than 20 years. He was arrested in 2006 along with six other construction workers from Liberty City, a mostly Black neighborhood in Miami. The seven were framed up on charges of plotting to blow up the Sears Tower in Chicago and the FBI building in Miami, and with conspiracy to provide "material support" to al-Qaeda.

Paid FBI agent provocateurs entrapped the seven. The government produced no weapons or any evidence

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S. Africa: Youth share experiences of struggles

BY LAURA GARZA
AND PAUL PEDERSON

PRETORIA, South Africa—Nine days of rolling political exchanges among 15,000 young people from across the African continent and every region of the world came to a close here December 21. The 17th World Festival of Youth and Students, dedicated to the struggle against imperialism, was the first in the 65-year history of these gatherings to be held in sub-Saharan Africa.

A mock anti-imperialist court was the main event of the final two days of the festival. Dozens of delegates testified. Their speeches included condemnations of U.S. colonial rule of Puerto Rico, the legacy of British imperialist domination of Sri Lanka and Nepal, and the long-term effects of the spraying of the chemical defoliant Agent Orange on Vietnam during

Continued on page 4

Locked-out building workers get aid from unions, tenants



SEIU Local 32BJ

Rally in support of locked-out workers at Flatbush Gardens in Brooklyn, December 2.

BY MIKE FITZSIMMONS

BROOKLYN, New York—Maintenance workers and porters organized by Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 32BJ at the Flatbush Gardens apartments here are fighting a lock-out by Renaissance Equity Holdings. The more than 70 workers have maintained picket lines seven days a week at several entrances to the 59-building complex.

Landlord David Bistricher locked out the workers November 29 and hired replacements. The company said it would continue to do so until Local 32BJ work-

Continued on page 3

What Kind of Socialism For the 21st Century?

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Tokyo to shift military posture toward China

BY CINDY JAQUITH

The Japanese cabinet adopted a 10-year military plan December 17 that aims more troops and weapons toward China, in line with steps taken by other U.S. allies in the region.

Tokyo’s current military posture, a vestige of the Cold War, is still largely based on being prepared for an attack from Russia, the justification offered by imperialists at the time. Under the new plan, the Japanese government will build new bases on several of its small islands closest to China, expand its submarine fleet, increase “intelligence-gathering,” and extend the deployment of Aegis-equipped destroyers and Patriot missiles. “Since the last defense-program guidelines came out, our national-security environment has changed dramatically, including the situations in North Korea and China,” said Jun Azumi, vice minister of defense.

Tokyo is among Washington’s key allies in its campaign to pressure the government of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea to give up its nuclear program. The Japanese government has also found itself in conflicts with Beijing, the most recent being in September when Tokyo briefly detained the crew of a Chinese trawler that collided with two Japanese coast guard vessels in waters claimed by both countries.

“Japan’s development and prosperity cannot be divorced from China’s development and prosperity,” warned the *Chinese People’s Daily* after that incident. “Japan cannot afford the price of continued contention with China.” Roughly 20 percent of Japan’s foreign trade is with China, more than

any other single country.

Tokyo’s military plan includes continuing to spend \$2.2 billion per year through 2016 to cover some of the expense of maintaining 47,000 U.S. troops on bases in Japan. That budget had been cut repeatedly over the previous 10 years under public pressure, including large protests on the island of Okinawa against U.S. military presence there.

U.S. troops have been stationed in Japan ever since the end of World War II. Under the “Peace Constitution” Washington imposed on Tokyo, the Japanese army and navy were dissolved and replaced with the Self-Defense Force, empowered only to defend the country, or if unable to do so, to call upon U.S. troops to aid it. No Japanese troops were to be sent abroad.

The constitution renounced possession of “offensive” weapons and nuclear arms. But Tokyo’s annual military spending exceeds \$50 billion, ranking sixth in the world, ahead of Germany. In 2003 hundreds of Japanese troops



U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Jacob Moore
Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force warship (foreground) and U.S. Navy ships December 10 during Keen Sword 2011 exercises in Pacific Ocean. Japanese government plans greater collaboration with Washington, applying military pressure on North Korea and China.

were sent on a foreign mission for the first time since World War II, joining the U.S.-led war in Iraq.

As they scramble to hold onto their place in the world market, the Japanese capitalists are confronting their military limitations. Following an exchange of fire between the South Korean and

North Korean militaries in late November, Japanese prime minister Naoto Kan suggested Tokyo could send troops to evacuate Japanese citizens living in South Korea, arousing tension between Seoul and the Japanese government. Japan was the colonial ruler of Korea in the first half of the 20th century.

Asylum seekers shipwrecked in Indian Ocean

BY RON POULSEN

SYDNEY, Australia—As many as 50 people died after their boat crashed into rocks on Christmas Island in the Indian Ocean December 15. The craft, laden with passengers from the Middle East desperate to seek asylum in Australia, broke apart in a heavy storm. Forty-two were rescued due to the solidarity of island residents.

Some survivors are in hospitals. The rest are being held at Australia’s immi-

gration detention facilities on the island.

Two days after the tragedy, protests erupted among detainees at the detention centers. They targeted authorities for failing to rescue people and poor conditions inside the overcrowded camps.

The Indonesian fishing boat was carrying more than 90 men, women, and children, mainly Iraqis, Iranians, and Kurds. About 50 island residents threw life jackets and ropes over a cliff to those in the sea who were trapped amid debris and high waves pounding the rocks.

After some time, a naval patrol boat and customs vessel arrived to dispatch smaller craft to rescue survivors. Thirty bodies were later recovered.

Scores of people, including at least one survivor of the disaster, joined a demonstration at one detention center December 17. Later the same day some 70 internees protested at another facility. There are 2,879 asylum seekers being held on the island in three detention compounds originally meant to house a few hundred.

Three inquiries have been launched

following the shipwreck—a coroners inquiry, an Australian Federal Police investigation to find the “people smugglers” who organized the boat, and an operational inquiry into how the boat was missed by naval surveillance.

Labor prime minister Julia Gillard proposed a multiparty committee that would be briefed on the disaster.

Liberal opposition leader Anthony Abbott declined the offer. He claimed that “tougher” polices like those of the previous conservative government, such as offering only restrictive, temporary visa protection to recognized refugees, would avert such disasters by “stopping the boats.”

There is bipartisan agreement on the mandatory detention of asylum seekers without papers who arrive by boat.

This is a two-week issue of the *Militant*. The next issue will be sent to subscribers and distributors on January 6.

THE MILITANT

World Festival of Youth and Students

Thousands of young people from around the world gathered at the World Festival of Youth and Students in Pretoria, South Africa, December 13–21 to discuss the fight against imperialism. The ‘Militant’ is on the scene, bringing you firsthand coverage.



Militant/Maceo Dixon
Opening ceremony at 17th World Festival of Youth and Students in South Africa.

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The Militant

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Miami meeting discusses activities to free Cuban 5

BY DEBORAH LIATOS

MIAMI—A meeting of 80 people here December 12 discussed further steps in the fight for freedom for five Cuban revolutionaries jailed in the United States for more than 12 years.

Known as the Cuban Five— Fernando González, Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino, and René González—were convicted on frame-up charges including “conspiracy to commit espionage.” The five had been monitoring the activities of right-wing Cuban exile groups in Florida that have a history of carrying out violent attacks on Cuba with the complicity of the U.S. government.

The meeting reviewed the fight to free the five. In 2008 a federal appeals court ruled that the sentences for three of the five were excessive. Labañino’s life sentence plus 18 years was reduced to 30 years. Fernando González’s sentence of 19 years was reduced to 17 years plus 9 months. Guerrero’s sentence of life plus 10 years was reduced to 21 years and 10 months. The court did not reduce René González’s 15-year term or Hernández’s double life sentence plus 15 years.

Hernández filed a federal habeas corpus appeal on June 14 requesting a new trial. The trial of all five was marked by violations of their democratic rights. Their request for a change in trial venue from Miami, where counterrevolutionary Cuban American groups are based, was denied by the trial judge.

Gloria La Riva of the National Committee to Free the Cuban Five gave an update on the legal appeals. She said contributions are being collected to place

a full-page ad in the *Washington Post* to demand freedom for the Cuban Five.

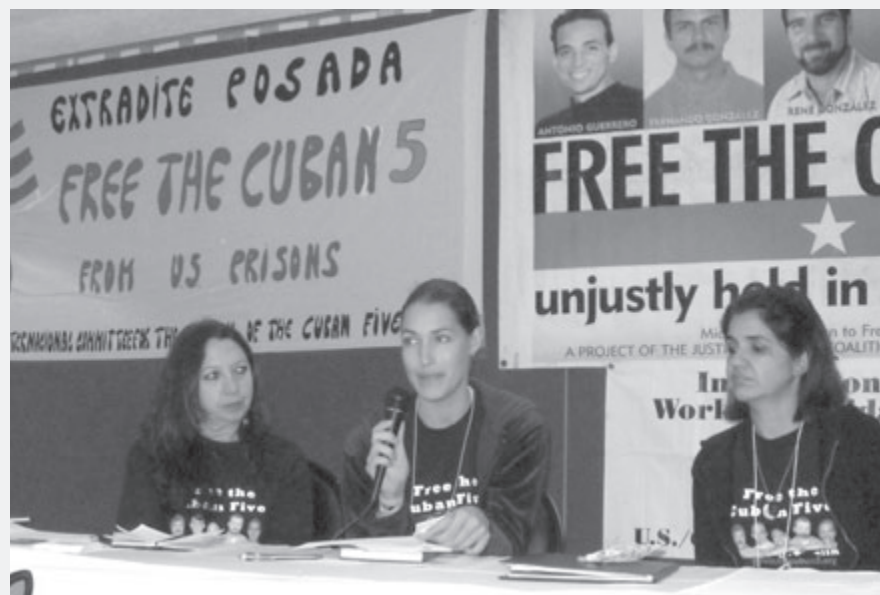
The meeting also gave tribute to Tony Llansó, who passed away December 6 in Cuba after a long struggle with cancer.

Llansó was active in building and defending meetings in Miami to support the Cuban Revolution. He helped organize protests against U.S. government restrictions on the right to travel to Cuba and against the U.S. embargo. For the last two years Llansó was president of the Alianza Martiana in Miami, an alliance of organizations in solidarity with Cuba and opposed to U.S. attacks on the island.

Andrés Gómez, national coordinator of the Antonio Maceo Brigade, told the meeting that Llansó often accompanied the family of René González on their visits with René in Marianna prison in Florida.

“Tony became a political leader. He became a man of consequence, a disciplined leader. On behalf of the Antonio Maceo Brigade he helped the families of the Cuban Five,” said Gómez.

Tijuana conference features panel on Cuban 5



Militant/Gerardo Sánchez

An evening in solidarity with the Cuban Five was a highlight of the Cuba/Venezuela/Mexico/North America Labor Conference, held in Tijuana, Mexico, December 3–5. Alicia Jrapko (left), of the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban Five; Ailí Labañino (center), daughter of Ramón Labañino; and Silvia García, member of the National Assembly of People’s Power in Cuba spoke at the opening night of the conference attended by more than 75 participants.

Ailí Labañino brought greetings to the conference from her father on behalf of the five, thanking conference participants for their support and reaffirming the fight “for our cause and the cause of Cuba.” “International events like this are important,” she said. “They give us a lot of optimism.”

—LEA SHERMAN

Gov’t loses frame-up, tries for deportation

Continued from front page

that the defendants planned to carry out the bombings.

The jury in the first trial acquitted Lemorin and a mistrial was declared for the other defendants. A second trial of the remaining six in 2008 also resulted in a mistrial. A year later, the government finally obtained a conviction of five defendants. They were sentenced to between six and 13 years in prison.

Deportations of some 30,000 Haitians were suspended after the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti. Immigration and Customs Enforcement spokeswoman Barbara Gonzales said the agency decided in December, in coordination with Haiti’s government, to resume deportations, beginning with about 350 Haitian nationals who have been convicted in U.S. courts. Lemorin, even though he has never been convicted of a crime, is included among that group.

More than 100,000 people died in the earthquake. Over a million still live under tents and tarps. More than 2,500 have died there since a cholera outbreak that began in November.

Charles Kuck, Lemorin’s lawyer, filed an emergency petition before the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals December 15 after Lemorin was moved to an immigration jail in Louisiana housing other Haitians awaiting deportation. “It’s a complete tragedy, a complete disregard for human life,” Kuck said.

Charlene Mingo, Lemorin’s wife, told the *Miami Herald*, “I still can’t understand why he’s being penalized for something he didn’t do.”

Immigration judge Kenneth Hurwitz, who ordered Lemorin deported in 2008, conceded he did not plan any attacks. The judge claimed that by working for a construction company owned by Narseal Batiste, who was convicted in the third trial, Lemorin was guilty of material support to terrorism. The judge’s deportation order was upheld by an immigration appeals board in Virginia.

Under the USA Patriot Act adopted after Sept. 11, 2001, the government can deport lawful U.S. residents like Lemorin on terrorism-related accusations even if they have not been convicted.

Brooklyn building workers fight lockout

Continued from front page

32BJ workers accepted “the best and final proposal presented to them on September 1.”

Some 200 protesters turned out in front of the management office December 22 in a rally called by the Flatbush Gardens Tenants Association. Participants included locked-out workers, tenants, and other neighborhood residents. Seven members of SEIU Local 32BJ from the nearby Spring Creek Apartments also came in solidarity.

Among those addressing the rally were: Michael Fishman, president of

Local 32BJ; locked-out workers Lucien Clarke and Lance Boyce; Marietta Short, president of the tenants association, and several Democratic Party politicians, including Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz.

“The fight starts here,” Clark told the rally. “If Bistricher breaks us, others are watching and will follow the pattern. This fight is for everybody.”

The union says the company wants to cut wages by more than 30 percent and make workers pay for health insurance.

“At Flatbush Gardens, you’ll save money without sacrificing your standard of living,” says the company website.

Workers on the picket line present a different picture. They filed a complaint with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration about overflowing raw sewage, leaking overhead waste pipes, and vermin infestations. Shawn Williams, a boiler technician, said they had to use duct tape to repair leaky pipes.

Workers add that the landlord refuses to supply them with adequate materials or cleaning supplies. Tenants have noted that workers sometimes pay out of pocket for supplies like outlet covers and air fresheners.

With 8,100 outstanding building code violations, Bistricher appears on the New York City Public Advocate’s “Worst Landlords Watch List.”

According to Desmond Tennant,

the union steward at Flatbush Gardens and a maintenance worker for 33 years, UPS drivers and Verizon phone technicians have honored the picket lines. City Department of Sanitation workers have refused to pick up trash except when ordered by the Department of Health. Locked-out worker Herman Hinds said police escort the sanitation trucks, “trying to make us out as hooligans.”

Other unionists have visited the pickets, bringing coffee, tea, soup, and money. They include members of SEIU Local 1199, the Transport Workers Union, and United Steelworkers. An earlier solidarity rally December

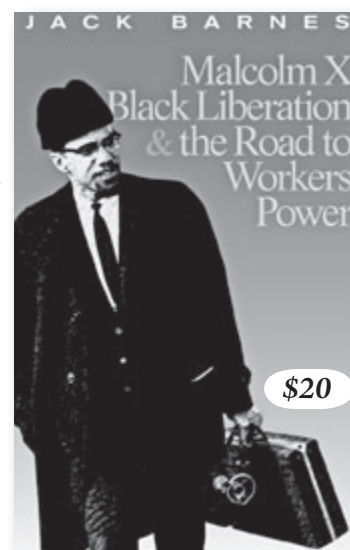
Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power

by Jack Barnes

“This is a book about the dictatorship of capital and the road to the dictatorship of the proletariat. A book about the last century and a half of class struggle in the United States—from the Civil War and Radical Reconstruction to today—and the unimpeachable evidence it offers that workers who are Black will comprise a disproportionately weighty part of the ranks and leadership of the mass social movement that will make a proletarian revolution. . . .”

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AUSTRALIA

Sydney

Reportback from 2010 World Festival of Youth and Students in South Africa. Speaker: Linda Harris, participant in festival. Sat., Jan. 8, 6 p.m. Upstairs, 281-7 Beamish St., Campsie. Tel.: (02) 9718-9698.

World Youth Festival

Continued from front page

the U.S. war there. Delegates from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States also testified about the struggles of workers, farmers, and other oppressed peoples inside the imperialist countries.

How to respond to the fight of immigrant workers was debated in several workshops. This discussion took place at the same time massive lines of Zimbabweans stood outside at Home Offices in South Africa, trying to get legal papers. As many as 3 million Zimbabweans in South Africa are facing a December 31 deadline to apply for legal status or face deportation.

Speaking about the challenges in South Africa itself, chief judge Andile Mngxitama gave final remarks at the anti-imperialist court. “After 16 years of democracy only 6 percent of the land has been returned to those from whom it was stolen. Some 80 percent of the land remains in the hands of 1 percent of the population,” he said. “At the same time teachers and nurses had to strike for very reasonable wage increases and our schools and hospitals are falling apart.”

Many young delegates from South Africa drew out this picture. Decius Neo Letlhogile, 26, a student at North-West University and one of the thousands of African National Congress Youth League delegates, said, “The government helps with loans to pay tuition,” but that falls far short of what is needed. He depends on his family selling goats, sheep, and cows they have raised during the year to pay for his schooling.

“We are a rural country,” explained Butsha Lali, 30, a municipal worker from the Eastern Cape, “but development is concentrated in cities far from where most South Africans live.”

Struggle in Swaziland

More than 100 young people from Swaziland came to the festival to report on the struggle against the repressive monarchy of King Mswati III. Over 200 delegates attended a workshop about that fight. The Swazis explained they face possible arrest upon their return for coming to the festival.

Pius Vilakati, 28, is a student who led several marches protesting government cuts in education earlier this year. He described how the police told him to “stop these demonstrations and threatened me.”

Vilakati told the story of Sipho Jele, who had been arrested along with others at a May Day demonstration for wearing T-shirts with the acronym PUDEMO.

The People’s United Democratic Movement, the main opposition group in Swaziland, is banned. Jele died in police custody.

Shortly after speaking at the funeral for Jele, Vilakati learned police planned to arrest him and he managed to escape to South Africa.

Students from South Africa, Lesotho, Namibia, and Mozambique joined the discussion on how to support the fight for democratic rights in Swaziland. Many said they had not known of the repressive conditions in the country.

The fight to free the Cuban Five

A major discussion among the delegates was the fight to free the five Cubans unjustly imprisoned in the United States for monitoring right-wing groups that have carried out violent assaults against Cuba. The five are Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González, and René González.

Speaking in a workshop, Aili Labañino, daughter of Ramón, described the impact of international solidarity for the five. When Hernández was released from solitary confinement earlier this year, “the prison official begged Gerardo to please make a call and let people know to stop calling the prison because he had been besieged by protest calls,” she said.

Others in the Cuban delegation included Guerrero’s son Antonio Guerrero, Jr.; Irma González, daughter of René González; as well as family members of



Militant/Tom Baumann

Swaziland delegation, marching next to United Kingdom delegation with banner on Cuban 5 at closing march of World Festival of Youth and Students in Pretoria, South Africa.

those killed when a Cuban plane flying off the coast of Barbados was blown up by opponents of the Cuban Revolution in the mid-1970s.

Debate on national struggles

In one workshop a Turkish delegate argued that the autonomous Kurdish region in northern Iraq serves the interests of imperialism. A group of Kurdish delegates took issue with that characterization. They cheered the remarks by one delegate from the United States who said the right of nations to self-determination is a pillar of the fight against imperialism.

The *Festival News*, distributed to delegates daily, sparked a debate when

reporting on elections held in independent Kosova. A delegate from Serbia spoke in several workshops to denounce independence for Kosova saying it was a tool of U.S. imperialism, which was primarily responsible for the breakup of Yugoslavia.

Annalucia Vermunt, a delegate from New Zealand, responded in one of the workshops that you could oppose U.S. intervention in Yugoslavia and support the right of Kosova to independence. “Revolutionary working-class movements have always supported the right of self-determination of oppressed nations, including the right of complete separation,” she said.

Keen interest in revolutionary books in South Africa

BY WILLIE COTTON

PRETORIA, South Africa—“I think it’s vital to know about the struggle for socialism in other countries,” Melusi Nzimande, from eThekweni on the eastern coast of South Africa, told young socialists who were distributing books by Pathfinder Press here to participants in the 17th World Festival of Youth and Students. “A friend of mine bought eight or 10 books yesterday, so I had to come today,” Nzimande said.

Festival participants bought more than 380 copies of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States. The book explains how the revolutionary conquest of power by the working class will make possible the final battle for Black freedom—and open the way to a socialist world.

The festival was dedicated to Fidel Castro and Nelson Mandela. Young Socialists sold all 160 copies they brought of Pathfinder’s *How Far We Slaves Have Come*, which contains speeches by both revolutionaries from July 26, 1991, when Mandela visited Cuba.

More than 100 copies of *Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?* and 228 various issues of *New International*, a Marxist magazine of politics and theory, were also sold at festival workshops and conferences.

Many visited the stand of the U.S. delegation, which was shared by the Young Socialists and the Young Communist League. Young socialists displayed a poster with photos and captions illustrating their participation in

various aspects of the U.S. class struggle and an assortment of Pathfinder books. “It’s important to get information about struggles, so you can link them together and fight better,” said Abdulla Boiya, a 22-year-old from Western Sahara.

Word got around as delegates were introduced to Pathfinder books on women’s liberation and speeches by Thomas Sankara, leader of the 1983–87 revolution in the West African country of Burkina Faso. Ninety-one women’s liberation titles were purchased along with 173 Sankara books. Also sought after were *The Communist Manifesto* by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels and books by V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky, two central leaders of the Russian Revolution.



Militant/Maceo Dixon

U.S. delegation booth at World Festival of Youth and Students. At left are displays and books from Young Socialists. Close to 1,700 Pathfinder titles were sold over course of nine-day festival. Young Communist League banner is in upper right.

New International no. 12

“Capitalism’s Long Hot Winter Has Begun”

by Jack Barnes



\$16

Today’s accelerating global capitalist slump accompanies a continuation of the most far-reaching shift in Washington’s military policy and organization since the U.S. buildup toward World War II. Class-struggle-minded working people must face this historic turning point for imperialism, and chart a revolutionary course to confront it.

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New International no. 13

“Our Politics Start with the World”

by Jack Barnes



\$14

The huge economic and cultural inequalities between imperialist and semicolonial countries, and among classes within almost every country, are produced and accentuated by the workings of capitalism. For vanguard workers to build parties able to lead a successful revolutionary struggle for power in our own countries, our activity must be guided by a strategy to close this gap.

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by Richard Levin, Steve Clark

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Sahrawis explain fight against Moroccan rule

BY ALEX XEZONAKIS

PRETORIA, South Africa—The national liberation struggle of the Sahrawi people of Moroccan-occupied Western Sahara was a feature of discussion and debate here at the 17th World Festival of Youth and Students, where many learned about it for the first time.

Eleven Sahrawi independence fighters were arrested by Moroccan authorities as they tried to leave Western Sahara to bring their fight for self-determination to the festival, held December 13–21. Of the 101 Sahrawi delegates who did make it, 29 came from the occupied zone; the rest from refugee camps in Algeria. According to the leadership of the delegation, the 29 are marked for arrest by Moroccan authorities when they return.

“You can’t imagine how many people wanted to be here,” Kharrachi Benbahh, a young man from the occupied territories, told the *Militant*.

“There is a big possibility I will be arrested and tortured when I go back,” said Roubio Ali, 23, a photographer from the occupied zone. “My family has told me not to return. But I will go back anyway. It doesn’t matter what my family says because comrades have been arrested.”

In face of a growing independence struggle led by the Polisario Front, Spain ceded control of Western Sahara in 1975 to the semicolonial regimes of

Mauritania and Morocco. The Polisario Front launched a war against the occupying powers, defeating the Mauritanian forces within a few years. But when the war ended in 1991 the Moroccan government controlled 80 percent of Western Sahara. The independence movement has been participating since then in UN-sponsored negotiations for a referendum on Sahrawi independence.

The largest protests in recent years occurred in Western Sahara in the months prior to the festival. Up to 30,000 people set up four camps in the occupied territory to protest Moroccan rule and the systematic discrimination against Sahrawis in employment, housing, and education.

Protesters demand ‘Free Sahara’

The biggest action was at the Gdim Izik camp outside the city of El-Aaiún. The camp was destroyed by the Moroccan army November 8. Jamal Kraidach, 32, who lived at the camp, told how soldiers encircled the area and a two-hour battle between protesters and soldiers ensued. Thousands took to streets of El-Aaiún in protest, chanting “Free Sahara.”

“Even though they outnumbered us, it didn’t stop people,” said Kraidach. He said Moroccan nationalists under the protection of armed troops attacked protesters. “They stole from our bazaars and broke into homes.” For days afterwards police would arrest any Sahrawi they saw. Offices and schools in the city were closed for a week.

Mariam Zafri, 27, from Smara in the occupied zone said that students walked out in solidarity with the El-Aaiún protesters. “It is a dictatorship. Sahrawi students aren’t going to school for fear of being attacked,” she said. “Most youth can’t find work. You have two choices: either accept being moved to the north of Morocco or remain without education.”

Over the last couple of decades, the Moroccan government has moved



Militant/Maceo Dixon

Sahrawis participate in opening ceremony of World Festival of Youth and Students in South Africa. Eleven Sahrawis were arrested by Moroccan authorities on their way to festival.

Moroccans to occupied Western Sahara. They now outnumber Sahrawis, who must carry ID cards marked with “SH” or face jail. Sahrawis can also be distinguished by their Hassaniya Arabic dialect and clothing.

“I cannot lose hope to see my country” said Najla Mohamed Lamin, 21. Like many Sahrawis she was born in the refugee camps in Algeria. Lamin said that young people there are fed up with years of stalled negotiations overseen by the United Nations. “Now the youth especially want to fight, seeing it as the only way to get their homeland back.”

The camps are in the middle of a desert, and are dependent on aid, which she said is inadequate. “We study in the camps and have opportunities to study in Algeria, Cuba, and other countries. There are Cuban doctors in the camps and Sahrawi students train to be doctors in Cuba,” she said. Two Sahrawis currently studying in Cuba came with the Cuban delegation.

The Sahrawi delegates organized events, displays, dances, and other impromptu activities. Many delegates were invited for tea later to continue discussion.

A solidarity forum for Western Sahara heard greetings from delegations and organizations from around the

world. Some 250 festival participants protested at the Moroccan embassy in Pretoria.

Targets of provocation

Activities organized by Sahrawi participants were targets of provocation and disruption by the 150-strong delegation from Morocco, which was led by youth groups affiliated to the Socialist Party and Communist Party. They distributed literature defending the Moroccan monarchy and its occupation of Western Sahara.

In one provocation, Sahrawi delegate Rashid Lehbib Hosein, 23, from the Awserd refugee camp, was arrested by South African police officers after a Moroccan who lives in South Africa appeared with a bandaged arm and neck accusing him of assault. Examinations of the man by police quickly showed he had no injuries, and Hosein was released without charge.

“They attack us to put fear in the hearts of Sahrawis,” said Kraidach. “It doesn’t work. That’s why 29 of us from the occupied territory came to the festival. We will return without fear. Maybe I will be arrested but the struggle will remain until we get our freedom.”

Paul Pederson and Linda Harris contributed to this article.

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25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



January 10, 1986

CHARLESTON, W. Va.—Following a National Labor Relations Board ruling that all A.T. Massey Coal Co. affiliates are part of a single company, the United Mine Workers of America has called an end to its 15-month strike at Massey Coal mines.

Massey’s owners are claiming that they do not have to allow all the strikers to return to work and that the company is not bound by the terms of the 1984 contract the union signed with coal companies that make up the Bituminous Coal Operators’ Association (BCOA).

The strike began after Massey refused to sign the no-concessions agreement the union had negotiated with the BCOA.

Massey sought to test the will of the UMWA and force it into submission. So far, the determination of the ranks of the union has prevented that.



January 2, 1961

DEC. 28—The eighth day of the protest strike movement in Belgium swept more workers into the movement against the government’s “austerity” program. UPI reports from Brussels today state that “More than a half million workers were still out and the strike was still spreading.” Thousands of Catholic trade unionists have joined the walkout despite the fact that leaders of the Confederation of Catholic Social Christian Unions had volunteered to help the government smash the strike by calling upon its members to remain at work.

The government has been stepping up its campaign of intimidation and violence against the Socialist-led strikers. The UPI reports that “tough paratroopers in full battle kit,” have been “rushed back from North Atlantic Treaty Organization duty in West Germany.”



January 4, 1936

In Italy in 1921 Mussolini’s Blackshirts organized and signed an agreement with the Italian Socialist Party for “mutual” disarmament. This pact led to the disappearance of the workers’ Red Militia. The Blackshirts two years later took power and smashed what was left of Italian workers’ organizations.

In France last month the Socialist and Stalinist parties bound themselves to a similar agreement for “mutual” disarmament and dissolution. In a terrible scene of “reconciliation” in the Chamber of Deputies on Dec. 6 the Socialist and Stalinist bureaucracies joined the Fascists to set the seal on the betrayal of the French workers.

The result gave the French bourgeoisie a new weapon in its systematic drive against the French workers, in preparation for new turns in the screws of exploitation under a deepening crisis, and in preparation for war.

How Cuban working people ‘stormed

Introduction to ‘Soldier of the Cuban Revolution: From the Cane

Below is the introduction to *Soldier of the Cuban Revolution: From the Cane Fields of Oriente to General of the Revolutionary Armed Forces* by Cuban brigadier general (ret.) Luis Alfonso Zayas, who is today one of the national leaders of the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution. Pathfinder will release the book in January, in both English and Spanish (see ad on this page for special publication offer). The photographs here are taken from the more than 30 pages of photos in the book. Copyright © 2011 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

Soldier of the Cuban Revolution: From the Cane Fields of Oriente to General of the Revolutionary Armed Forces tells the story of the revolution in the most accurate and effective way it can be told—through the life of one of its protagonists. Luis Alfonso Zayas’s story is at once both unique and typical of the young men and women, many still in their teens, who more than a half century ago threw themselves into uncompromising struggle to rid Cuba of a bloody military dictatorship, and dared to take on the propertied classes of Cuba and the United States whose interests that tyranny served.

Through Zayas’s account, we come to understand how hundreds, then thou-

sands, and eventually hundreds of thousands of ordinary working people transformed *themselves* as they gained confidence in their own collective strength “to storm the heavens,” in Karl Marx’s memorable words of tribute to the working men and women of the 1871 Paris Commune, the first government of the working class in history.

In refusing to betray the goals for which they fought, Cuba’s workers and farmers accomplished what all the voices of both bourgeois authority and petty-bourgeois hesitancy, in Cuba and beyond, assured them was “impossible.” They broke the armed might, and then the economic power, of the existing ruling classes and set out to create a truly just world order. They began to build Cuban society on a new, a proletarian, economic and social foundation, as they simultaneously extended the hand of solidarity to those in combat against imperialist domination and capitalist exploitation around the globe.

Soldier of the Cuban Revolution is not the first book published by Pathfinder Press that seeks to bring Cuba’s socialist revolution to life in this way for new generations of working people and youth. It joins a growing arsenal of titles that includes *Our History Is Still Being Written* by Armando Choy, Gustavo Chui, and Moisés Sío Wong; *Aldabonazo* by Armando Hart; *Marianas in Combat* by Teté Puebla; *From the Escambray to the Congo* by Víctor Dreke; *Pombo: A Man of Che’s ‘guerrilla’* by Harry Villegas; *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* by Jack Barnes; and *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War* by Ernesto Che Guevara.

In each, the author tells the story of how as a rebel-minded young person they found themselves drawn to, and educated by, the revolutionary struggles of the Cuban workers and farmers who refused to accept the conditions of



Fidel Castro (center) and other combatants meet with peasants in Sierra Maestra mountains, early 1950s. Army leaders met with peasants to “explain the objectives of the revolution, including an agrarian program.”

life imposed on them by the propertied families who owned the plantations, mills, and factories. And how they never turned back.

Several things stand out in the firsthand story of Alfonso Zayas as it unfolds through these pages.

One of the most powerful sections of the book is the author’s account of economic and social relations that shaped struggles in the countryside as he was growing up in the 1940s and ’50s, when Cuba was the largest sugar producer and exporter in the world and supplied 37 percent of the sugar consumed in the United States alone.

- The vast sugar plantations owned and managed by US capitalist giants such as the United Fruit Company (reinvented as Chiquita Brands International some years ago) and the Cuban-American Sugar Mills Company, with their comfortable “American zone” schools, clinics, tennis courts, and swimming pools, reserved for the enjoyment of the resident US management personnel and a handful of Cuban overseers.

- The American owners’ calculated policies to isolate their self-sufficient

realms from the rest of Cuba, with their company stores supplied directly from the United States, roads that were little more than often-impassable dirt tracks, and narrow-gauge rail lines that connected to nothing beyond the boundaries of their plantations, some of which extended over hundreds of square miles.

- The precarious, often brutalized, existence of even those Cubans who held title to a few acres of land, such as Zayas’s father, and were supposedly “free” to sell the cane they grew.

- How Washington’s infamous “sugar quota”—the US-imposed trade “agreement” setting the yearly tonnage exported from Cuba to the United States—actually worked. How this quota was wielded like a whip against small agricultural producers, subordinating them to the giant capitalist enterprises and assuring that farmers, not mill owners, bore all the risks of cultivation.

- The desperate conditions in which the families of those lucky enough to find seasonal jobs as mill hands or farm laborers survived, especially during *el tiempo muerto*, the eight months of “dead time” between sugar harvests

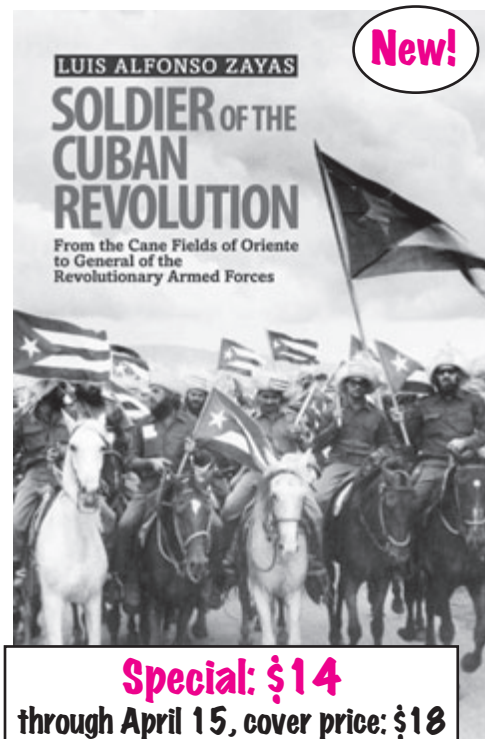


Militant/Martin Koppel

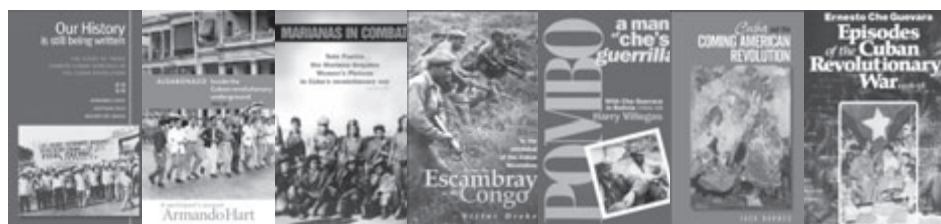
Alfonso Zayas during interview, June 2007.

Soldier of the Cuban Revolution

From the Cane Fields of Oriente to General of the Revolutionary Armed Forces



Luis Alfonso Zayas, today a general in the Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces, recounts his experiences over five decades in the Cuban Revolution. From a teenage combatant in the clandestine struggle and 1956–58 war that brought down a U.S.-backed dictatorship, to serving three times as a leader of the Cuban volunteer forces that helped Angola defeat repeated invasions by the army of white-supremacist South Africa, Zayas tells how he and millions of ordinary men and women in Cuba changed the course of history and, in the process, transformed themselves as well.



Our History Is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution Armando Choy, Gustavo Chui, Moisés Sío Wong

Aldabonazo: Inside the Cuban Revolutionary Underground Armando Hart

Marianas in Combat: Teté Puebla and the Mariana Grajales Women’s Platoon in Cuba’s Revolutionary War, 1956–58 Teté Puebla

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In each of these seven books, “the author tells the story of how as a rebel-minded young person they found themselves drawn to, and educated by, the revolutionary struggles of the Cuban workers and farmers who refused to accept the conditions of life imposed on them by the propertied families who owned the plantations, mills, and factories. And how they never turned back.”

—from introduction to *Soldier of the Cuban Revolution* by Mary-Alice Waters

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the heavens,’ transformed themselves

Fields of Oriente to General of the Revolutionary Armed Forces’



Cuban Council of State Office of Historical Affairs
y 1957. Throughout war, Alfonso Zayas says, Rebel
n reform that would guarantee them land.”

each year when there was no work to be had.

• The weight of this hundreds-of-thousands-strong reserve army of labor in the countryside, the existence of which was a precondition for the continued profitability of Cuba’s inefficient sugar industry—and whose deep traditions of struggle reaching back through generations of resistance and combat against slavery, colonial rule, and imperialist domination were a precondition for the triumph of the revolution.

“Today’s generation didn’t live in the Cuba of old,” Zayas says. No one under fifty was even born yet when that Cuba disappeared forever. No one under sixty had even entered their teens. “They see photographs of what Cuba was like then, but they don’t know how life was under capitalism.

“It’s not that there are no problems in Cuba today,” Zayas notes. But when young Cubans go abroad to offer their services in various countries, including Venezuela and Haiti, “they see the reality in these places firsthand, and that gives them a clearer understanding of what the revolution changed.”

Soldier of the Cuban Revolution gives readers everywhere a clearer understanding of what Cuba’s workers and farmers changed when they opened—and, to this day, successfully continue to defend—the socialist revolution in our hemisphere.

Through the account in these pages, we are able to participate alongside Zayas in the clandestine actions of the July 26 Movement in Puerto Padre, his hometown. We go with him and his compañeros in the initial group of reinforcements—the fifty-one *Marabuzaleros*, as they became known—who in March 1957 joined the twenty-two Rebel Army combatants who had regrouped in the Sierra Maestra mountains after their initial setbacks. Together with Zayas, we grow through the battles, both political and military, waged by the Rebel Army in its formative months. In the process, we come to appreciate in an entirely new way the decisive weight of the rural toilers who early on threw themselves

into the revolutionary war and joined the ranks of the combatants.

The Rebel Army could not have survived without the years of prior work that made possible the supplies and lines of communication organized by the clandestine cadres of the July 26 Movement in the cities and the wide network of support not only among workers but reaching deep into the middle classes. But the reader can understand that without the broad support of campesinos and young workers in the countryside like Zayas—recruits used to hard work, accustomed to the rigors of rural life, steeped in the ways of survival, knowledgeable about the operations of Cuba’s hated *Guardia Rural* and other repressive forces, and deeply committed to the struggle—the odds would have been poor that the few dozen combatants in the early period of the Rebel Army could have avoided annihilation by the well-armed military forces of the US-backed tyranny of General Fulgencio Batista.

Zayas himself underlines this fact in a firsthand description of the epic hardships faced by the one hundred forty men in Che Guevara’s famous Column 8 who marched from the Sierra Maestra to the Escambray mountains of central Cuba in September and early October 1958—an operation expected to take forty-eight hours that lasted forty-seven days instead. “If we’d advanced by truck [as initially planned], maybe we would have fallen into an ambush and none of us would have made it,” Zayas says. If we had covered those three hundred seventy miles “in forty-eight hours, perhaps we wouldn’t have weeded out the quitters, those who didn’t have the willpower to continue. Perhaps we would never have been able to measure the capacities of those who did.”

That proletarian morality of the Rebel Army became the foundation of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Cuba, the FAR, formed after Batista’s military forces were defeated in battle and disintegrated by the power of the revolutionary mass insurrection that swept the country in the first hours of January 1959. It was the moral and political foundation of the forces of the Revolutionary National Militia, the Revolutionary Na-



Bohemia
Peasant families being evicted by plantation owners, Camagüey province, 1942. Book describes economic and social conditions in capitalist Cuba, including hundreds of thousands who made up reserve army of labor for wealthy owners of US-dominated sugar industry. These workers’ deep traditions of struggle, reaching back generations, “were a precondition for the triumph of the revolution,” says Mary-Alice Waters.



Courtesy Alfonso Zayas

Zayas was among a group of 51 that made up first reinforcement detachment to Rebel Army in March 1957, tripling the number of combatants. Above, the new recruits meet with Fidel Castro (with glasses, right center) in Sierra Maestra. They include Raúl Castro Mercader (with helmet), Zayas (behind Castro Mercader, to left), Orlando Pupo (center), Alcibiades Bermúdez (just behind Fidel Castro), and Julio Pérez (bottom right).

tional Police, Ministry of the Interior, and Cuba’s internationalist volunteers throughout the Americas, Africa, and beyond.

The insight Zayas’s account of the revolutionary war gives us goes far in explaining what the leaders of neither Washington nor of apartheid South Africa could comprehend. How was it possible for Cuba to mount the military operation it did some sixteen years later—not with a few thousands in elite units, but with a volunteer force that numbered nearly four hundred thousand Cubans over a decade and a half, volunteers who were willing to give their lives, as two thousand did, to defend the newly independent government of Angola against the forces of South Africa’s white supremacist regime and its allies?

“Washington’s great strategists couldn’t even conceive of the kind of consciousness the Cubans demonstrated,” the author says. And he is right. It is a class blindness they have never overcome, and never can.

Soldier of the Cuban Revolution includes Zayas’s reflections on his three tours of duty in Angola between 1975 and 1987, serving at the request of the Angolan government in primarily civil-

ian assignments. His story widens the scope of the firsthand accounts and documents available, especially in English, including those previously published by Pathfinder in books such as *How Far We Slaves Have Come* by Nelson Mandela and Fidel Castro, *Cuba’s Internationalist Foreign Policy* by Fidel Castro, and *Our History Is Still Being Written*.

Of special interest are Zayas’s observations about his work to help draw up development plans for oil-rich Cabinda province, which is separated from the rest of Angola by a strip of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire). His account of the divisions within the governing Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and 1977 coup attempt against MPLA leader Agostinho Neto is similarly valuable, as is the description of the joint Angolan-Cuban military counteroffensive in early 1976 that pushed apartheid’s reactionary, Zaire-based allies out of northern Angola.

What comes through Zayas’s account is eloquently summarized in the words of then Minister of the FAR Raúl Castro, speaking to the final group of volunteers returning to Cuba some twenty years ago, in May 1991:

If there’s anything unique about the Cuban presence in Angola—which was the continuation of our best national traditions—it was the people’s massive support for it. . . . Even more far-reaching and significant was the absolutely voluntary nature of the people’s participation. Ours was not just a professional army, even if we take great pride in our troops’ conduct in combat, in their technical preparedness—but an army of the masses, a revolutionary army of the people. . . .

Faced with new and unexpected challenges, we will always be able to remember the epic of Angola with gratitude, because without Angola we would not be as strong as we are today.

The “new and unexpected challenges” Cuba was already facing in 1991 were
Continued on page 8

Soldier of revolution

Continued from page 7

the consequence of the evaporation of 75 to 85 percent of Cuba's exports and imports, as the bureaucratic Stalinized regimes of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union collapsed like a "meringue," to use the evocative phrase of then Cuban president Fidel Castro. There was an abrupt loss of vital supplies—from food, clothing, and fertilizers, to fuel, paper, machinery, and spare parts—losses that paralyzed every facet of agriculture, manufacturing, and transportation. Overnight a substantial, nearly thirty-year-long subsidy to the Cuban economy, in the form of favorable terms of trade and long-term loans, was wiped out. In response, Cuba's revolutionary leadership initiated what was known as the "Special Period in time of peace," and activated contingency plans developed to allow the Cuban people to survive even if the island were completely isolated by a naval blockade.

In the darkest moments of the Special Period, in 1993–94, Cuban families literally did not know from one day to another where their next meal would come from. But as Raúl foresaw, the hundreds of thousands of Cuban workers, farmers, and youth who had in the preceding years put their lives on the line in the struggle against apartheid South Africa *did* make the difference. They were stronger for that proletarian internationalism. They knew better the stakes they were fighting for and what Cuban working people were capable of achieving. Through the enormous efforts of Cuban workers and farmers and the measures taken by their government, production slowly began to recover. By the end of 1996, the very worst of the Special Period was behind them. And contrary to the predictions of all its enemies, the Cuban Revolution had proved in practice that its proletarian class foundations remained intact.

Throughout these harshest years of the Cuban Revolution, Zayas served as second in command of the Ejército Juvenil de Trabajo (EJT), the Youth Army of Labor, made up of special units of the Revolutionary Armed Forces that since 1973 have been a critical component of the rural labor force. Its units are organized, as Zayas says, to "fight, resist, and produce." Their contribution to meeting the food crisis of the Special Period was decisive, and remains so.

Agricultural products from farms operated by the Youth Army of Labor are brought into the cities and sold at EJT stands and food fairs for prices substantially lower than at other markets. This government policy implemented by the FAR assists those most in need, especially retirees scraping by on meager pensions. It helps hold down food prices by offering an alternative to farmers markets where prices are not capped. If an older person is short on money, Zayas notes, the established policy has been, "Give it to them. No charge." That's how EJT markets have been run.

A special period—with a small "s" and small "p"—still exists in Cuba, and will continue. The preferential trade policies, and other forms of subsidies and aid that cushioned Cuban working people against the capitalist world market, and against the incomparably greater productivity of labor in the imperialist countries, will not return. There will be no cease-fire in the fifty-year-old economic war waged against socialist Cuba by the imperialist colossus to

the north. For the US ruling families, only surrender by the working people of Cuba would suffice; only reversal of the revolutionary actions that wrested fertile lands, factories, and natural resources out of the control of capital would meet their demands.

That is the goal Washington has been vainly striving to achieve for more than half a century. It is in face of this social and political fact that the battle to produce, the battle to raise living standards, the battle to defend Cuba's socialist course is being waged by the workers, farmers, and young people of Cuba today.

■

The *political* front of the US rulers' economic war has a different focus, however, and Zayas's account of the battles waged during the opening months of the revolution underscores this.

Conjuring forth, financing, promoting, and publicizing a "democratic" counterrevolution has been, from the very first days, the US rulers' political weapon of choice. The propaganda drumbeat never stops.

The goal: To persuade those around the world attracted to the liberating example of the Cuban Revolution that socialism, far from being the road to eradicating the myriad forms of tyranny and oppression produced by capital,



Granma

Jesús Sosa Blanco (standing at right), henchman of deposed dictator Fulgencio Batista, stands trial for murderous crimes, February 1959. Zayas was in charge of La Cabaña prison where more than a thousand of these government thugs and torturers were turned over to await trial. Fidel Castro later said, "This may have been the only revolution in which war criminals were tried and brought to justice, not dragged through the streets."

instead means the suppression of individual freedom and inevitable narrowing of human rights—as has occurred in more than one country since early in the twentieth century and been defended in the name of "communism."

The imperialist campaign began in the very first weeks of 1959, as Batista's army of thugs were attempting to flee the country. Zayas was assigned by Ernesto Che Guevara to take charge of the prison at La Cabaña, the Rebel Army command post in the Spanish colonial fortress overlooking Havana Bay. "There weren't many prisoners at first," Zayas recounts, "but they quickly start-

ed to arrive." He continues:

On January 1, in response to Fidel's call for a general strike and a popular insurrection, police stations and garrisons all across the country had been taken, and in the days that followed many of the regime's henchmen were captured. I'm talking about the ones who didn't escape with Batista—the ones who had to pay for their crimes. From all directions, at all hours of the day and night, patrol cars began to arrive at La Cabaña. In the end, more than a thousand of these thugs and murderers had been turned over.

As Zayas describes, revolutionary tri-

Continued on page 9



Militant/Jon Hillson

Members of Cuban women's antiaircraft artillery unit, May 1989, after return from Angola following defeat of final South African invasion. Some 375,000 Cubans served as internationalist volunteer combatants. "Without the experience of Angola we would not be as strong as we are today in face of challenges confronting Cuba," said then Cuban minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces Raúl Castro to returning volunteers in 1991.

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Greetings to workers behind bars

The *Militant* sends New Year's greetings to the more than 3 million fellow workers behind bars in the United States.

The U.S. government intervenes around the world in the name of "democracy" and "human rights." Meanwhile, 25 percent of the world's prisoners sit in U.S. jails. The government continues to restrict workers' rights in the name of fighting terrorism.

The overwhelming majority of U.S. prisoners are working people, especially Blacks, Latinos, and Native Americans. Tens of thousands of immigrants are jailed for the "crime" of working without papers.

The U.S. government holds more than a few political prisoners and others resisting unjust convictions who refuse to give in. Of special note are the Cuban Five—René González, Fernando González, Antonio Guerrero, Gerardo Hernández, and Ramón Labañino—Cuban revolutionaries who were framed-up and handed long federal prison terms. Their

crime? Gathering information on counterrevolutionary groups that have carried out armed attacks and acts of sabotage against Cuba with the complicity of Washington.

This year, in a victory for working people, Puerto Rican independence fighter Carlos Alberto Torres was released after 30 years. Two other Puerto Rican political prisoners continue to fight for freedom: Oscar López, imprisoned for 29 years, and Avelino González Claudio, held for almost three years.

Troy Davis and Mumia Abu-Jamal persist in their struggles against death-row convictions. Attorney Lynne Stewart, railroaded to jail on "terrorist" charges, enters her second year in prison. Native American activist Leonard Peltier is now 34 years behind bars.

We encourage our readers to contribute to the Militant Prisoners' Fund to make it possible for fellow workers behind bars to receive free or reduced-price subscriptions.

'Soldier of the Cuban Revolution'

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bunals were established to hear evidence against each of them and hand down decisions. The outcry began immediately from the great defenders of bourgeois democracy, law, and order to the north. Cuba's popular revolutionary leadership was executing its enemies without due process, they charged. But the truth was the opposite. "No one was executed without having a trial with all established guarantees," Zayas notes. In fact, "had these individuals been released, they would have been lynched in the street. We had to protect them from the population. The people wanted justice for the deaths of their family members, their loved ones."

Responding to questions about these revolutionary tribunals put to him a few years ago by journalist Ignacio Ramonet, Fidel Castro explained further:

Here, when [the dictator] Machado fell, in 1933, Machado's people were dragged through the streets; there were lynchings, houses were invaded and attacked, people sought vengeance, revenge. . . . So throughout the entire war, thinking about the mass violence that can accompany the victory of the people, we warned our country about that. . . .

This may have been the only revolution in which the main war criminals were tried and brought to justice, the only revolution that didn't rob or steal, didn't drag people through the streets, didn't take revenge, didn't take justice into its own hands. . . . And if there were no lynchings, no bloodbaths it was because of our insistence and our promise: "War criminals will be brought to justice and punished."

One need only remember the corpse of Mussolini dangling by its feet in the streets of Milan, or the vengeful circus preceding the US-imposed regime's execution of Saddam Hussein in 2006, to recognize the powerful example set by the Cuban Revolution as it led the victims of Batista's tyranny to transform vengeance into revolutionary justice. Nothing throws the proletarian character of that revolution into sharper relief.

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The interviews with Alfonso Zayas that eventually became *Soldier of the Cuban Revolution* were conducted by Martín Koppel and me in February and June 2007 and March 2009 in the national offices of the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution (ACRC) in Havana, Cuba. Koppel is a staff writer for the *Militant* newsweekly and a Pathfinder editor. Another interview with Zayas, early this year, in which *El Militante* editor Róger Calero participated, added further details and clarifications.

The close interest and at times insistent inquiries of the executive vice president of the ACRC, General Harry Villegas—known throughout

the world today as "Pombo"—were an ever-present stimulus. And the exacting work of Iraida Aguirrechu of Editora Política, the publishing house of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, was indispensable. She took part in every step of the process, from initial interviews to final review.

The famous photograph of the mounted militia unit riding toward the headquarters of the US-owned United Fruit Company in May 1960 to announce that the workers and farmers of Cuba had expropriated its vast plantations was given to Pathfinder more than a decade ago by Raúl Corrales, one of the finest photographers of the revolution. Corrales granted permission to reproduce that memorable photograph on a cover of our choosing, and no more appropriate choice can be imagined than this book.

Many of the other historic photos included here were supplied by the author. Others were located with the aid of the always helpful staffs responsible for the photographic archives of the periodicals *Granma* and *Bohemia*. And we are especially grateful for the help of Francisco Rodríguez Robles of the Youth Club in the nearby Jesús Menéndez municipality, who found, scanned, and sent us a photograph of the Chaparra sugar mill as it looked in the days before the revolution, when Zayas was growing up virtually in its shadow.

Above all, our thanks go to General Alfonso Zayas for his many long hours of work that made this book possible. The current and future generations of revolutionary-minded workers and farmers, and young people attracted to them, for whom this book is written, will now have a clearer view of the deep roots of the Cuban Revolution and the men and women whose actions made it the beacon it remains in the world today. They will know better the proletarian character traits and discipline they must emulate if they are to engage in similar deeds in every country the world over whose toilers are oppressed by capitalist exploitation.

November 2010



Granma

Cuban market run by Youth Army of Labor (EJT), 1995. The EJT, of which Zayas was deputy head, has been critical part of rural labor force. It helped meet food crisis of 1990s, when, with collapse of Soviet regime, Cuba abruptly lost most imports and exports. The EJT brings produce into cities to sell at reduced prices.

Afghanistan war

Continued from front page

ghan Taliban have key bases in Pakistan. With the tacit acceptance of Islamabad, the CIA has carried out at least 112 drone missile attacks in 2010 inside Pakistan as of December 17, double what it did in 2009.

Until recently almost all the CIA drone missiles were fired in Pakistan's North Waziristan Province, where the Haqqani network and other al-Qaeda and Taliban groups are based. But on December 16 and 17, the CIA launched four drone strikes in Khyber Province, killing as many as 54 people. These strikes were directed at Lashkar-e-Islam, which is opposed to the Pakistani government, and other Pakistani Taliban groups.

Aside from directing the drone attacks in Pakistan, CIA agents command a thousands-strong paramilitary force in Afghanistan. According to the *New York Times*, the agency's Kabul headquarters is the largest CIA station since the Vietnam War.

The White House overview says the U.S. military has made most progress against the Taliban in southern Afghanistan, especially in Helmand and Kandahar provinces, including capturing or killing hundreds of Taliban leaders.

While fighting in Kandahar has reportedly quieted down since a U.S. offensive in the fall, 42 U.S. Marines have died in Helmand since taking over parts of the province from British troops on September 20.

The *New York Times* reported December 15 that in Kunduz Province, in northern Afghanistan, Taliban have won some support despite the more than doubling of U.S. and German troops in the north since last year.

As part of Washington's "counterinsurgency" strategy, the U.S. military has been promoting local militias that are little more than armed thugs of one or another local landlord, drug traffickers, or gang, who impose taxes and harass peasants and merchants, much like the situation that reigned before the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in 1996. Michiel Hofman, a representative of Doctors Without Borders, told the *Times* that setting up health clinics in Kunduz has become extremely difficult. "Every five kilometers there's a different commander with no central command structure," he said.

White House pressures Islamabad

A large part of the White House overview lays out continuing to pressure the Pakistani government to take more aggressive action against armed Afghan groups that operate from Pakistan, crossing mountain passes along the 1,600-mile-long shared border.

Washington has a complicated and at times tense relationship with the Pakistani government and military. The U.S. government provides \$2 billion a year in military and civilian funds to Pakistan every year.

The Pakistan military has launched offensives against Taliban groups that attack Islamabad, while avoiding going after those Taliban groups that are only at war with U.S.-led forces in Afghanistan, in spite of U.S. pressure to do so. It does, however, collaborate with U.S. drone attacks and assists U.S. Special Forces operating in Pakistan.

The Haqqani network and many Afghan Taliban groups have long been used by Islamabad as vehicles for maintaining Pakistani influence in Afghanistan and to counter Indian government plans for wider influence in the region.

Obama's escalation of the Afghan war and stepped-up attacks in Pakistan have won support from conservatives in the United States.

"On Afghanistan, Obama has become a hawk in dove's plumage," Max Boot, the author of numerous books backing U.S. military intervention around the world, writes in the December 27 *Weekly Standard*. "Obama is doing more than most conservatives expected he would. . . . And Republicans, to their credit, are standing behind him."

'Militant' Prisoners' Fund

The Prisoners' Fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced-rate subscriptions. To donate, send a check or money order payable to the Militant and earmarked "Prisoners' Fund" to 306 W. 37th St., 10th Floor, New York, NY 10018.